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THE  
EDUCATIONAL  
LEADER



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## EDITORIAL NOTE

THE contributors to the current issue of THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER are all members of the Language and Literature Department of Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg, with the exception of Richard J. Stonesifer, Assistant to the Dean, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa. The inclusion of Doctor Stonesifer's article, "In Defense of Dewey Dell," prompts the editor to observe that good articles from sources outside our own college are also welcomed.



## *The Rape of the Lock: The Baron's Sneeze*

By CHARLES E. GUARDIA

The continuing duality of focus required by the mock-heroic form has been aptly demonstrated by Professor Geoffrey Tillotson:

The epic, along with tragedy, has always been considered the most serious of poetic forms, but from the earliest times it has been skirted, or even intruded upon, by the comic. Homer, or some one else, had written the *Margites*, which, said Aristotle, stood in the same relation to comedies as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to tragedies. And the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* remains to show a trivial subject comically exalted by the epic manner, or, conversely, an exalted manner comically degraded by a trivial subject. Even in his "serious" epics Homer did not seem entirely serious. He impaired the sacredness of his celestials, degrading gods into men at the same time that he elevated men into gods.<sup>1</sup>

Even such method does Alexander Pope employ throughout his apotheosis of the trivial, *The Rape of the Lock*. While Belinda's voyage to Hampton Court reminds us of the journey of Aeneas up the Tiber and the grandiloquently paced game of ombre succeeds to the place of Homeric contests of strength and valor, true maidenly honor is accorded only parenthetical concern and the love of wife for husband pales beside the devotion of wife to lap-dog; and that magnificent set-piece, the battle between the Beaux and Belles, described in terms deriving ultimately from the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, culminates in victory for the Belles only when the Baron, the chief of the Beaux, gives vent to a reverberating sneeze.

In spite of Ariel's busy intentness, none of the sprites contributes in any way to Belinda's victory. Even the care with which the Gnomes "direct . . . The pungent Grains of titillating Dust" is without import; the unaided Belinda threw snuff in the Baron's nose in Pope's original published version. (Because incidents of present interest are largely unchanged after Pope's addition of the sylphs of the five-canto version of 1714 and the new Clarissa episode of 1717, reference is here made regularly to the two-canto version of 1712.) And precisely what are we to make of the Baron's sneeze? Does a young lady of the early seventeen-hundreds discommode a suitor by throwing snuff in his face? Such tactics savor of the "sneeze-lurker" or foot-pad who, casting snuff in a man's eyes, makes off with the victim's watch and purse. But Belinda throws the snuff smartly into the Baron's nose, not his eyes; and a resounding sneeze would not incapacitate a snuff-taking

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1. *The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems*, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson (Vol. II of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, London, 1940), p. 106.

dandy. Of no surprising novelty within its own eighteenth-century milieu, the Baron's sneeze constitutes one more allusion to traditional materials of the epic poem.

The Baron can hardly pretend that the lock symbolizes Belinda's love; the lock can betoken her affection only if she has herself presented the souvenir to him. Indeed, he is not particularly interested in the lady's affection:

Th'advent'rous Baron the bright Locks admir'd;  
He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd.  
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,  
By Force to Ravish, or by Fraud betray;  
For when Success a Lover's Toil attends,  
Few ask, if Fraud or Force attain'd his Ends.<sup>2</sup>

Like Fielding's Mr. Wilson in his younger days, the Baron is more immediately interested in gaining a reputation for intrigue than in securing Belinda's devotion. And when Belinda's friends demand the return of the severed lock, the Baron permits himself a self-satisfied smirk:

It grieves me much (reply'd the Peer again)  
Who speaks so well shou'd ever speak in vain.  
But by this Locke, this sacred Locke I swear . . .  
That while my Nostrils draw the vital Air,  
This Hand, which won it, shall for ever wear. (II, 49-51, 55-6)

The sorrowful Belinda speaks her lament for the lost lock and then Thalestris urges on the battle of the Beaux and Belles. The carnage is enormous but unsubstantial, and the details of the outcome remain equivocal. Pope envisions no final clear-cut victory in this war between the sexes, and he makes it obvious that this is a war of no physical wounds. In brief, according to Pope's poem, the Baron advances to do battle with Belinda; Belinda throws snuff in his nose; the Baron sneezes; and, when the clamor of his sneeze has died away, Belinda is revealed as victor in the contest and the Baron admits her supremacy. Explanation of this singular chain of events is to be found in the fact that, coming when it does, the Baron's nasal spasm constitutes a truly epic sneeze—an omen which Belinda and the Baron alike (with their superior classical education) understand as Jove's signal that victory belongs to the Belle.

Snuff-taking and the ensuing sneeze are of course regular phenomena of eighteenth-century English life. *Spectator* number 134 for August 3, 1711, presents "The Humb'e Petition of Benjamin Easie, Gent.," that either a certain "bold Amazon" who is an adept

2. *The Rape of the Locke* (1712), I, 47-50 (Tillotson, p. 128). All quotations from 1712 and 1714 versions of this work are from Professor Tillotson's edition.

at the "Exercise of the Fan" be ordered to "lay down her Arms" or that her male victims be summoned together "and there be taught to manage our Snuff-Boxes in such manner as we may be an equal match for her."<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of snuff-taking among women is topic for particular discussion in *Spectator* number 344 for April 4, 1712, and *Tatler* number 35 for June 30, 1709, the latter commenting, further, that "taking snuff . . . is done only to supply with sensations the want of reflection. . . . The native Hibernians, who are reckoned not much unlike the ancient Boeotians, take this specific for emptiness in the head."<sup>4</sup> For Sir Plume of "round unthinking Face," conversation indeed lies in the snuff-box; it is not only in "the Lunar Sphere" that

Heroe's Wits are kept in pondrous Vases,  
And Beau's in Snuff-Boxes and Tweezer-Cases. (II, 160-1)

In the everyday life of the Greeks and Romans, the sneeze is only one of many insignificant events which, occurring at a prophetic or crucial moment, can be interpreted as an augury of the future. In classical literature the ominous sneeze is frequently alluded to and relied upon as a signal of divine favor. In the field of lyric verse, for example, *Carmen* number 45 of Catullus foretells the favor of the God of Love as the lover Septimius and his lady Acme swear devotion: "Love on the left, as before on the right, sneezed goodwill."<sup>5</sup> The heroic Xenophon profited by two sneezes: he owed his appointment as general to the happy event of a sneeze to the right of him while he was making a speech; later, exhorting his soldiers to valorous deeds against the Persians, he predicted glorious victory with the favor of the gods. "As he was saying this a man sneezed, and when the soldiers heard it, they all with one impulse made obeisance to the god." And Xenophon, declaring the sneeze "an omen from Zeus the Savior," vowed to sacrifice thank-offerings at the first opportunity.<sup>6</sup> According to Plutarch, Themistocles determined to sacrifice to Bacchus the Devourer three noble captives at whose approach "the fire blazed out from the offerings with a more than ordinary flame, and a man sneezed on the right, which

3. *The Spectator*, ed. Henry Morley (London, 1891), I, 468.

4. *The Tatler*, ed. G. A. Aitken (London, 1898-9), I, 284-5.

5. *Poems of Gaius Valerius Catullus*, trans. F. W. Cornish (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1924), p. 53, p. 55. See also Tennyson's "Edwin Morris, or The Lake" (1851):

Shall not Love to me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,

Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left? (Lines 78-80)

6. *Xenophon*, trans. C. L. Brownson et al. (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1918-23), II, 441 (*Anabasis* III, ii).

was an intimation of a fortunate event . . . So should the Greeks not only save themselves, but also obtain victory."<sup>7</sup>

A particularly portentous sneeze occurs, of course, in Book XVII of the *Odyssey*, after the return of Ulysses but before his discovery of himself to Penelope. When Penelope spoke aloud her wish that Ulysses might return to his native land and with his son Telemachus take vengeance on the troublesome suitors for their violent deeds,

Telemachus sneezed loudly, and all the room about echoed wondrously. And Penelope laughed, and straightway spoke to Eumaeus winged words:

"Go, pray, call the stranger here before me. Dost thou not note that my son has sneezed at all my words? Therefore shall utter death fall upon the wooers one and all, nor shall one of them escape death and the fates."<sup>8</sup>

Until the time of Jacob, according to Talmudic teaching, a sneeze had heralded the departure of the soul from the body, and thus when a man sneezed he died instantly. "Jacob prayed to God to grant him time to prepare for his death by making his will. This, to the surprise of all, was granted to him; and so it was told Joseph, 'Behold thy father is sick' (Gen. xlviii. 1). Henceforth it became the rule that illness should precede death. For this reason when one sneezes he should wish himself 'hayyim' (for life!)"<sup>9</sup> This explanation Sir Thomas Browne preserved in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Vulgar Errors*, along with many more of the popular beliefs concerning the sneeze,<sup>10</sup> while the old saying, "We are never so near death as when we sneeze," perpetuates the tradition in succinct form. The Baron's sneeze may thus signalize his symbolic death, in accordance with earliest Hebrew lore, as well as the withdrawal of his tutelary genius. For Apollo abandoned Hector to the rage of Achilles on the battlefield of Troy when the golden scales of Jove had weighed that warrior's fate;<sup>11</sup> and just so, in *The Rape*

7. Plutarch's "Lives" ("Dryden" translation), ed. A. H. Clough (Boston, 1898), p. 82.

8. *Odyssey*, trans. A. T. Murray (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1919), II, 191.

9. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, under heading "Asusa, Asuta ('health')."

10. *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1928), III, 39-42 (Book IV, Chapter ix, "Of Sneezing"). See p. 40 for "the Rabinical account hereof"; p. 39 for the general superstition: "Concerning Sternutation or Sneezing, and the custom of saluting or blessing upon that motion, it is pretended, and generally believed to derive its original from a disease, wherein Sternutation proved mortal, and such as Sneezed, died"; and p. 41 for Aristotle's view of the sneeze as "a sign of Sanity in the diviner part."

11. See Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, Book XXII:

Jove lifts the golden balances, that show  
The fates of mortal men and things below;  
Here each contending hero's lot he tries,  
And weighs with equal hand their destinies.  
Low sinks the scale surcharged with Hector's fate;  
Heavy with death it sinks, and hell receives the weight.  
Then Phoebus left him. (Lines 271-7)

of the *Locke*, did the "golden Scales in Air" award victory to Belinda and defeat to the Baron.

See fierce *Belinda* on the *Baron* flies,  
With more than usual Lightning in her Eyes. (II, 130-1)

Plutarch's account of Themistocles' preparation for sacrifice may be observed here: "at the same time the fire blazed out from the offerings with a more than ordinary flame." Although "keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes" as Belinda makes her toilette in the 1714 version of the poem, the original version of 1712 refers to "Lightning" or "Lightnings" only in this moment of Belinda's victory; and lightning, of course, is in the epic regularly associated with the wrath of Jove.

Nor fear'd the Chief th' unequal Fight to try,  
Who sought no more than on his Foe to die. (II, 132-3)

Professor Tillotson has well noted that "the original wit of this threadbare innuendo is renewed when the context is a battle," for the use of the verb "to die" with the meaning "to experience the sexual climax" is older than Shakespeare.<sup>12</sup> And, since "we are never so near death as when we sneeze," it is possible for the Baron to attain his desire symbolically by suffering a figurative death. The Baron, who has sworn to keep the lock "while my Nostrils draw the vital Air," is clearly nearing the end of his custodianship. When his sneeze causes the expulsion of "the vital Air" the Baron is required by the gods to surrender the lock, but his honor as a gentleman and as an oath-taker has been meticulously maintained.

Sudden, with starting Tears each Eye o'erflows,  
And the high Dome re-echoes to his Nose. (II, 138-9)

The noise of the Baron's sneeze is heroic, as was that of Telemachus. And it is likely that, when Pope translated Book XVII of the *Odyssey* a decade later, the Baron's sneeze made a small contribution; for the nose itself is again prominently displayed, with the result that a straightforward translation such as "Telemachus sneezed loudly, and all the room round about echoed wondrously" is transmuted into

Telemachus then sneezed aloud;  
Constrain'd, his nostrils echo'd through the crowd.<sup>13</sup>

As soon as the Baron has sneezed his mighty sneeze, Belinda assumes the stance and speech of victor:

Now meet thy Fate, th' incens'd Virago cry'd,  
And drew a deadly *Bodkin* from her Side. (II, 140-1)

12. *The Rape of the Lock*, p. 201 (note on V, 78).

13. *Iliad*, trans. Alexander Pope, XVII, 624-5.



But, having conquered, she stops short of dealing the death-blow. The Baron is not to be literally slaughtered, as Pene'lope's suitors were. And so, victory gained, Belinda demands the return of the lock:

*Restore the Lock!* she cries; and all around  
*Restore the Lock!* the vaulted Roofs rebound.

Belinda has been censured for her bellowing, and perhaps Miss Arabella Fermor fancied herself ridiculed by so unladylike a scream. But the victorious warrior is allowed his shout of triumph, and Belinda, as warrior-surrogate, may well clamor for the return of the stolen property.

Professor Tillotson once complained of the original version of 1712 that "this parody of the epic form contained no parody of its most obvious butt, the supernatural machinery."<sup>14</sup> Only two years later, however, he cautioned:

It must not be overlooked—Pope and later critics overlooked it—that the additions do not provide the only machinery in the poem. They join a poem the machinery of which Addison had already commended. . . . So that it is to all this august machinery that Pope adds the more exquisitely mechanized sylphs and the dour goddess Spleen.<sup>15</sup>

The *deus ex machina* is indeed so much a commonplace of the epic that Pope wrote in his own facetious "Receit to make an Epick Poem" of 1713, with particular reference to supernatural interventions:

The Use of these Machines is evident; for since no Epick Poem can possibly subsist without them, the wisest way is to reserve them for your greatest Necessities. When you cannot extricate your Hero by any Human Means, or your self by your own Wit, seek Relief from Heaven, and the Gods will do your Business very readily.<sup>16</sup>

The judgment of Jove is clearly such a piece of "supernatural machinery," and it is not unprepared for. The infatuated Baron has offered his prayers to Love and yet he is not victorious: his sacrifice, like Theano's sacrifice to Pallas Athene, protectress of Troy, in Book VI of the *Iliad*, has been received by a divinity who grants less than his entire petition. To what god or goddess has Belinda done her service, that she should prevail? In the 1712 *Rape of the Locke* she has made no prayer; and so Pope would have good reason for inserting in his expanded version of 1714 the charming scene wherein Belinda performs "the sacred Rites of Pride." Now each leader in the drawingroom battle of the sexes has

14. *On the Poetry of Pope* (Oxford, 1938), p. 56.

15. *The Rape of the Lock*, Introduction, pp. 121-2.

16. *Guardian* No. 78 (Wednesday, June 10, 1713), in *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. Norman Ault (Vol. I: Oxford, 1936), pp. 115-20. Quotation from pp. 118-9.

served his god, as Emilia, Palamon, and Arcite pray and sacrifice to Diana, Venus, and Mars in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.<sup>17</sup> The description of Belinda as invoking, with gifts of "the glitt'ring Spoil," the favor of the goddess of Beauty (or Pride) and arming for the fray now points toward inevitable clash with the Baron, who propitiates his special god of Love (or Intrigue) at a curious altar of "twelve vast *French Romances*, neatly gilt." But no god, however partial toward a favorite, may shield that favorite from the consequence of actual misdeed; and the Baron's "new Stratagems" are more than even-handed justice will allow:

Ah cease rash Youth! desist e'er 'tis too late,  
Fear the just Gods, and think of *Scylla's Fate!* (I, 101-2)

Paris, whose abduction of Helen precipitated the Trojan war, could not avert the destruction of himself, his family, and his city. Just so must the Baron, whose crime is equated fantastically with that of Paris by the title of Pope's poem, suffer for his assault. As chief of the gods appropriately less prejudiced and more far-seeing, Jove visits his punishment upon violators of the accepted codes of behavior. The Baron is a deliberate transgressor and his downfall is clearly required.

Athene, Ulysses' guardian spirit, perches on a roof-beam in guise of a swallow to observe the slaughter of Penelope's suitors in *Odyssey* XXII, as Umbriel, in the 1714 *Rape of the Lock*,

on a Sconce's Height  
Clapt his glad Wings, and sate to view the Fight. (V, 53-4)

Perhaps the interpolation of such a detail attests Pope's original "imitation" of Telemachus' sneeze and the slaughter of the suitors in the 1712 *Rape of the Locke*. At any rate, he inserted in Volume I of his 1736 *Works* a pointed note of reference to these Umbriel lines, lest his classical allusion be overlooked: "Minerva in like manner, during the Battle of Ulysses with the Suitors in *Odyss.* perches on a beam of the roof to behold it."<sup>18</sup> While the sneeze of Telemachus precedes the destruction of the suitors, the sneeze of Belinda's Baron concludes the Battle of the Beaux and Belles, signalizing as it does the defeat of the chief of the Beaux at the

17. Compare Dryden's paraphrase, *Palamon and Arcite*, for Emily's reaction when the sacrificial flames on Cynthia's altar flicker, die, and rekindle:

The maid from that ill omen turned her eyes,  
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies.  
(III, 261-2)

Belinda is not without pattern for her plaints when, upon the theft of the lock,

The living Fires come flashing from her Eyes,  
And Screams of Horror rend th' affrighted Skies.  
(I, 119-20)

18. Quoted by Tillotson, *The Rape of the Lock*, p. 199 (note on V, 53-4).

hands, or more exactly "one Finger and a Thumb," of the leader of the Belles. Once again does "utter death fall upon the wooers one and all"—in a very particular sense.

Pope has thus heightened his parody by augmenting his parallels. But it did not remain for the sylphs to introduce the supernatural machinery. As machinery, the sylphs prove singularly ineffective, for Pope's Ariel, like Milton's Raphael, speaks his warning to ears almost wholly deaf and is powerless to determine the events of human life. Jove, on the other hand, moves directly to succor the outraged Belinda. "When you cannot extricate your Hero by any Human Means, or your self by your own Wit," wrote Pope, "seek Relief from Heaven, and the Gods will do your Business very readily." The Baron has promised to put Belinda's lock on public exhibition, so to speak, as Hector vowed to hang the Armor of Ajax in the temple of Apollo if that god assisted him to victory. And while Belinda does not actually recover the severed lock, which would be of little practical value to her, her reputation—her "honour"—has been protected. For the precious object has been delivered from the Baron's possession in accordance with Jove's decision—a decision signalized by the Baron's sneeze.

The fact that Belinda has herself called that omen into being is of particular significance as attesting her resourcefulness, and it is to be balanced, as if in Jove's "golden Scales in Air," against the Baron's original conquest of the lock. The Baron has stolen what can have true meaning only if freely given, and Belinda has moved forthrightly to recover the lock, forcing an omen which signifies that she, as the active agent when the sneeze resounds, is to gain supremacy. She has gained the favor of Jove because one lock of her hair is more ponderable than all the wit of the beaux—to speak in the terms of Pope's satire—because Belinda as the type of female beauty and light coquetry surpasses the Baron as the type of male gallantry and intrigue. Within a mosaic of parodies and allusions, some of them faint and elusive and some of them manifest, some as ancient as Homer and others as immediate as the *Spectator* papers, Belinda has won a propitious omen from the days of antiquity by flinging eighteenth-century snuff in her suitor's face.



## Emily Dickinson's Hummingbird

By REBECCA PATTERSON

Among the nearly seventeen hundred poems of Emily Dickinson are two describing the visit of a hummingbird to a garden of flowers. The first, apparently written about 1862, begins, "Within my garden rides a bird."<sup>1</sup> It likens the rapidly beating wing to the wheel of a "traveling mill" and to a "fairy gig" and then dismisses the bird to "remoter atmospheres" while the spectator rejoins her dog and wonders whether the visitor was not imaginary, a product of the "garden in the brain." It is a comparative failure.

The second hummingbird poem, according to manuscript evidence, was written in the summer of 1879:

A Route of Evanescence  
With a revolving Wheel—  
A Resonance of Emerald—  
A Rush of Cochineal—  
And every Blossom on the Bush  
Adjusts its tumbled Head—  
The mail from Tunis, probably,  
An easy Morning's Ride—<sup>2</sup>

That this second version is better seems to be a happy accident. The improvement can hardly be attributed to the maturing of Emily Dickinson's talent, for some of her best poems were in manuscript as early as 1862 and she had completed two-thirds of her poetry by 1865. But the happy accident deserves to be and can be analyzed.

In its 1879 version the poem is beautifully compact; it has mastered the plethora of images that confused the earlier version; and it is rich in allusiveness. Like all good poems, it vibrates in ways of which the reader has little conscious awareness, however deep'y he may be affected. Analysis of its construction, far from diminishing its interest, should only increase respect for the poetic process.

In "A Note on Emily Dickinson's Use of Shakespeare" Frank Davidson<sup>3</sup> has suggested an indebtedness to *The Tempest* for the phrase "the mail from Tunis," and this suggestion I have adopted. It will be remembered that the king of Naples and his retinue are returning from the marriage of his daughter Claribel to the king of

1. Emily Dickinson, *Poems* (edited by Thomas H. Johnson; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955, three volumes), II, 383.

2. *Poems*, III, 1010.

3. *New England Quarterly*, XVIII (1945), 407-408.

Tunis when their ship is wrecked on Prospero's island and the young heir to Naples, Prince Ferdinand, is presumed to be drowned. The king and his followers, after wandering about the island, are lulled asleep, with the exception of his brother Sebastian and the usurping duke of Milan, Antonio. The latter suggests that Sebastian follow his own bad example and make himself king of Naples by murdering his brother. Sebastian demurs; Claribel is still living and is "the next heir of Naples." Antonio replies scornfully:

She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells  
Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples  
Can have no note, unless the sun were post— (II, i, 234-36).

The effect is to make Tunis appear inconceivably remote, and it is just this effect that must have led Emily Dickinson to suggest the bringing of mail from Tunis as an example of the hummingbird's incredible speed. The hummingbird is equated with the sun.

But *The Tempest* contains a character who could also come from Tunis in a morning. Prospero's sprite Ariel boasts of his ability to serve his master,

be't to fly,  
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
On the curl'd clouds (I, ii, 190-92).

His master commands him to perform a task in a "twink," and Ariel promises to execute it

Before you can say 'come' and 'go,'  
And breathe twice and cry 'so, so' (IV, i, 44-45).

At another time he boasts:

I drink the air before me, and return  
Or ere your pulse-twice beat (V, i, 102-3).

He can be invisible (and the hummingbird is invisible) to all eyes but Prospero's, and he is small and finds his food like the bee (or like the hummingbird):

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie (V, i, 88-89).<sup>4</sup>

Emily Dickinson's hummingbird is plausibly identified with Ariel as well as with the sun that could be "post" from Tunis.

But the poet discarded Shakespeare's word "post" and substituted the word "mail," a significantly appropriate choice for this poem

4. That one of Ariel's tasks is to "fetch dew/ From the still-vex'd Bermoothes" (I, ii, 228-29) may also have its significance. In a poem beginning "The world feels dusty" (*Poems*, II, 548) Emily Dickinson asks to be allowed to minister to her lover in his last hour, "Dews of Thessaly to fetch." Any attentive reader of her poetry and letters will remember how often she uses "dew" as a symbol; its customary meaning is love.

because it involves an unconscious pun. The hummingbird is a male symbol; he is the *male* from Tunis.<sup>5</sup>

That the symbolism is erotic hardly admits of a doubt, although the identification must be made by analysis of the far more common bee and flower symbolism. In the poetry of Emily Dickinson the bee is at times embarrassingly phallic. For example, one poem begins:

Did the harebell loose her girdle  
To the lover bee . . .

Still another poem ("Come slowly, Eden!") concludes with these lines:

As the fainting bee,  
Reaching late his flower,  
Round her chamber hums,  
Counts his nectars—enters,  
And is lost in balms!

A poem of tragic intensity ("The soul has bandaged moments") has these lines:

As do the bee, delirious borne,  
Long dungeoned from his rose,  
Touch liberty—then know no more  
But noon and paradise.

One more example must suffice. A poem beginning "A bee his bur-nished carriage/ Drove boldly to a rose," describes the encounter in almost literal detail, then concludes:

Their moment consummated,  
Remained for him to flee,  
Remained for her of rapture  
But the humility.<sup>6</sup>

Bees and flowers, it need hardly be added, are among the commonest inhabitants of Miss Dickinson's poetic garden, and most of them are simply bees and flowers. A brief review of the earlier hummingbird poem would suggest that it has no erotic double meaning (and in consequence is less powerful), or if any there be, then it is buried in a heap of discordant images: garden, bird, wheel, traveling mill, spice, fairy gig, dog, brain, vibrating blossoms.

The imagery of the second poem is at once terser and more intricately connected. The absurd traveling mill has been compacted

5. The poet may well have known that the bird she describes is the male, that only the male of this species has the ruby throat, but this by itself is of negligible importance. A male student, with no particular insight into the poem, once made quite a point of assuring me that the hummingbird, in spite of its diminutive size, was not to be taken as weak or negligible; that he was represented as a thing of power. Girl students, when asked to interpret the poem, are more inclined to identify with the flowers and to write, quite innocently, of the flowers "waiting wearily for their consummation."

6. Others that might be mentioned are "It makes no difference abroad," "The Flower must not blame the Bee," and "Oh, honey of an hour."

to a revolving wheel,<sup>7</sup> and the intrusive dog and spectator are gone. The bird itself is nowhere named but is vividly suggested as a blur of color and a whirl of wings; and the individual blossom has apparently become spectator, passive recipient of the bird's attentions, and narrator of the poem. Most important, the imagery turns upon a carefully defined contrast (the first of several such contrasts that work to strengthen and unify the poem): The flowers are home-grown, earth-bound, rooted in the familiar New England soil; the bird and all things connected with him are exotic.

Although the ruby-throated hummingbird nests in New England and must occasionally have been a visitor to Miss Dickinson's garden, he is treated in the poem as an exotic, a migrant from southern latitudes. He carries the mail from Tunis; his colors are those of the cochineal and the emerald, both of them exotic and tropical or near-tropical products. By the imagery of this poem (not of the earlier version, which has nothing tropical about it except the word "spice"), the hummingbird is allied with the south.

Poem after poem could be cited to demonstrate that for Miss Dickinson, as perhaps for all poets, the tropics or the south symbolizes love. In a poem beginning "Our lives are Swiss—/ So still, so cool," she imagines the clouds parting for a momentary glimpse of Italy. In another poem ("I asked no other thing") the "mighty merchant" (God) refuses with a negligent smile her request for earthly love, here symbolized as Brazil. A poem beginning "I gave myself to him" says that the "wealth might disappoint":

But, till the merchant buy,  
Still fable, in the isles of spice,  
The subtle cargoes lie . . .

Another poem ("How sick to wait in any place but thine") declares:

Ours be the Cargo *unladen here*  
Rather than the "spicy isles"  
And thou not there.

7. Bemused doubtless by the word "mail" and by the indestructible myth of the poet's unrequited love for a respectable married clergyman, Grover Smith has metamorphosed the hummingbird into a railway train (Item 54, *Explicator*, VII, No. 7, May, 1949): "Beyond the image of the humming-bird is implicit that of a speeding railway train, the mail and express, and also that of the more common kind of mail—a letter. It is this which provides the perhaps wistful irony of the concluding line." I find no "wistful irony" in the concluding line but on the contrary a triumphant exultation akin to the "honey of an hour" and the "noon and paradise" of poems mentioned above. Although Miss Dickinson wrote one poem about a train and mentioned trains incidentally in several poems, she never seemed particularly at home with them, perhaps because they had so little part in that life of childhood and youth which constitutes a poet's deepest sources. She was grown before the train came to Amherst and her early memories of letters sent or received would have involved stage coaches or horse carriage. On the other hand, she had warm memories of a mill to which her much loved father had been in the habit of taking her when she was little more than a baby, and the mill figures as symbol in several poems. It appears likely that in the second hummingbird poem, as explicitly in the first, the revolving wheel of the bird's wing derives from the blurring spokes of that mill wheel on which her child's eyes opened.

A poem about some loved person ("Ourselves were wed one summer, dear") suggests that the other has been luckier in love:

'Tis true our futures different lay,  
Your cottage faced the sun,  
While ocean and the north did play  
On every side of mine.

An attentive reading of Miss Dickinson's letters and poems would reveal many other parallels, but these few should suggest that the hummingbird, tropical migrant and deputy of the sun, enters the poet's northern garden as a lover.

Imagery, symbolism, and literary allusion, all working toward a common effect, are strongly reinforced by the sound system of the poem. It has been pointed out that the imagery turns upon a distinct contrast between the exotic hummingbird and the home-bound flower. The first quatrain is concerned with the bird, the second with the flowers; and a little observation will show that the two are further distinguished from each other by means of meter and of vowel and consonant patterns.

The first quatrain, which belongs to the hummingbird, has an appropriately rapid movement. The opening line, "A route of evanescence," is a swift iambic trimeter, with a leftover, unstressed syllable vanishing into nothingness almost in the sense of the words. In the third line the concluding word "emerald" with its lingering, attenuating *r* and *l* appears to create much the same effect. All even-numbered lines in both quatrains are regular iambic trimeter (except for the initial reversed foot of line 2); and in so short a poem, where all is so nearly uniform, even small variations appear momentous. In the flower stanza the poet has created a deliberate, earth-bound movement by stretching out the odd-numbered lines to four feet. The effect is particularly marked in line 5, which closes heavily on the word "bush." It appears slow-paced, almost rooted, in contrast to the swift trimeters that have preceded it. The seventh line closes less heavily on the word "probably," but at this point, as will be shown, the poem is returning to the rapid, triumphant movement of the hummingbird quatrain.

The vowel pattern may be described as beginning with vowels that are predominantly high and shrill but modulating in the fourth line toward the dark back vowels that characterize the flower quatrain. The impression is that of the bird rushing down upon the flowers, then wheeling abruptly to vanish on the last high vowel of "cochineal." For a time the vowels remain dark and low





are important out of all proportion to their number, usually representing 30 percent of the total (the flower quatrain does contain 30 percent), then it would appear that the poet had a motive, conscious or not, for reducing the percentage of stops to something like the minimum. The explanation is not difficult to find. Although the plosives have little true sound, they are tremendous interrupters. If the hummingbird is to appear the magnificent conqueror he is, there must be no let or hindrance to his powerful rush; and that is apparently how the poem is to be read.

From the fixed point or springboard of the stop consonant in "route," the hummingbird launches out on his furious, irresistible course. There is a whirl and a blur of wings—a buzzing of sibilants and spirants, a gliding and swooping of sonorants, then a pivoting upon the stopped *k* and *t* of "cochineal," and the bird is off and away on the long high vowel and sonorants of the concluding syllable "-neal." The emphatic alliteration of "route," "resonance," and "rush" augments the impression of irresistible force.

The poem now takes a turn that is surprising and yet deeply, persuasively feminine. Each single blossom (or we might prefer to think of the bush, which sums up the diverse femininity of the individual flowers) has, it would seem, passively sustained the onslaught of the hummingbird. Although the flower or bush does not appear in the first quatrain except by implication, she is clearly the narrator; and the admiring, sympathetic description of her lover suggests that she surrendered consentingly. But she was never wholly passive. Ravished, delighted, momentarily carried away, in the fifth line she nevertheless asserts her separateness. In the sixth line she "adjusts" herself; and she does so with the little explosive tugs and pats of stop consonants. First come the emphatic *b*'s of "blossom" and "bush" (if it occurs to a reader that the choice of these words was necessitated by the sense of the line, he might try the experiment of substituting "And every flower on the vine": the difference in meaning is slight, but in poetic values immense). In the sixth line there is a whole series of little explosions—*d*, *t*, *t*, *t*, *b*, *d*, *d*. In the seventh line the flower is still uttering little explosive protests in the *t* of "Tunis" and the *p*, *b*, *b* of "probably." But the eighth line resolves this trifling and amusing conflict of the sexes with a gliding return to continuants before the final stop in "ride."

The concluding elliptical sentence offers a slight, pleasant ambiguity. We could read, "It's probably the mail from Tunis," with the emphasis on the "mail" or "male." Or we could read, "The mail

from Tunis would probably be an easy morning's ride for *that* fellow," with its half-mocking admiration. In whatever way we take it, the poem is all very delightful and wonderful—and quite beyond the experience of the Miss Dickinson who wrote the 1862 version.<sup>9</sup>

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9. This poem has always seemed to me peculiarly exuberant and happy. I could never relate it to the mournful legend of the Reverend Charles Wadsworth; and when the correspondence with Judge Lord became available in 1954, I was tempted to find in this the emotional groundwork of the poem. The conjectured dates seemed a little late. As the letters are now dated, however, they surround the poem and provide a plausible biographical context. Particular attention is called to Letters 559 and 562, dated "about 1878." Emily Dickinson, *Letters* (edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958, three volumes), II, 614, 617.



## Artemus Ward on Reform and Reformers

By JOHN Q. REED

Charles F. Browne, creator of Artemus Ward, was much more than a mere entertainer; he was also a searching critic of the society in which he lived. The decades of the 1850's and 1860's constituted a period of change and conflict, and they presented numerous incongruities and contradictions. Clear-sighted criticism of American society was badly needed, and there is every evidence that Ward realized this and that he took seriously his role as a critic of the American scene. Although it cannot be denied that his criticism occasionally displayed bigotry and Philistinism, it is also indisputable that he was often able to reveal issues in their true perspective during a period of intense ferment and confusion.

One of the most frequent objects of Ward's satire was the general reform movement which was so prominent a feature of mid-nineteenth century America. The following paragraph, which appeared in his column in 1859 under the heading "Why?", states clearly his general attitude toward the wave of reform which was sweeping the northern and middle states in the 1850's.

We can see no possible use for the numerous long-haired men and disagreeable he-women that are scattered over this Great Republic, and think they had better die as soon as possible. They profess to be in the Reform business but they are decided loafers. They toil not, neither do they spin. They are unmitigated sponges.<sup>1</sup>

The social consciousness and the humane spirit which were characteristic of the intellectual climate of the period found overt expression in such remedial enterprises as the temperance and abolition movements, campaigns for economic reform, and the crusade for women's rights. Firm in their belief that both men and institutions could and should be improved, and buttressed by nineteenth century pietism, the leaders of these movements were preoccupied with the idea of doing good and worked at it with a religious fervor. Merle Curti says that the complex forces behind the general reform movement of the period include the Enlightenment, romanticism, Utilitarianism, Christianity, democracy, and the social and economic tensions of the time.<sup>2</sup> Its close relationship to the re-

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1. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 26, 1859, p. 3.

2. Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1943, pp. 369-382.

ligious fervor of the age can be seen clearly in the career of Charles G. Finney, a very successful revivalist in the 1820's, who later became a leader of the abolition movement in the West.

One reform movement which caught Ward's attention was the campaign for women's rights. Led by such women as Lucretia Mott, Susan Anthony, Elizabeth Stanton, Elizabeth Smith, and Sara Josepha Hale, this movement was very strong during the 1850's and '60's.<sup>3</sup> The organization of women in their own cause may be said to have begun in August, 1848, when a women's rights meeting was held in Rochester, New York. In 1850 the first national convention was held, and within a decade the movement had spread throughout all of the northern states and to the west as far as Wisconsin and Kansas. Elizabeth Smith, wife of Seba Smith who wrote the Jack Downing papers, lectured on the question of women's rights, and Sara Josepha Hale carried on a campaign for equal rights for women in *Godey's Lady's Book* for years.<sup>4</sup> Although the struggle to obtain equal opportunities for women in education, in the professions, in the business world, and before the law, had made considerable headway by 1860, the accomplishments were made in the face of formidable opposition. Artemus Ward, who ridiculed the movement, was certainly not alone in his views. In 1849, for example, Richard Henry Dana had delivered a lecture throughout the country in which he ridiculed the demands of women for equal rights and privileges.<sup>5</sup>

Two of Ward's letters deal in a humorous and disparaging manner with the question of women's rights. In the first letter, which appeared in *Vanity Fair* under the heading "Artemus Ward on His Travels,"<sup>6</sup> the old showman tells of his meeting a determined and outspoken advocate of women's rights while traveling on a train westward from Detroit. The hard-headed showman was not impressed by the harangue of this woman about women's "spears."

On the cars was a he-lookin' female, with a green-cotton umbreller in one hand and a handful of Reform tracks in the other. She sed every woman should have a Spear. Them as didn't demand their Spears, didn't know what was good for them. "What is my Spear?" she axed, addressin the peple in the cars . . . "Is it to stay to home & darn stockins & be the *serlave* of a domineerin man? Or is it my Spear to vote & speak & show

3. For an account of this movement see Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History to 1860*, the University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1944, pp. 424-462.

4. Fred Lewis Pattee, *The Feminine Fifties*, D. Appleton Century Co., New York, 1940, p. 100.

5. Tyler, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

6. *Vanity Fair*, III (Jan. 12, 1861), p. 15. The same letter appears in *Artemus Ward; His Book* under the title "On the Wing."

had been active in the Temperance Movement of the 1840's, Ward apparently found the endless temperance meetings and lectures wearisome affairs.

The showman's encounter with a temperance lecturer occurs on the train when he is seized with a sudden faintness, real or imaginary, and orders a drink of whiskey. Just as he is about to swallow the spirits, however, a pale-faced man wearing gold spectacles lays a hand on his shoulder and says very solemnly, "Look not upon the vine when it is red." Although Artemus protests that he is drinking rye, not wine, the reformer continues to needle him until the showman loses his temper and tells him to mind his own business. This is the only criticism of the Temperance Movement to be found in Ward's writings, and it is a fairly mild one.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps he felt that since the movement was so popular at the time, a stronger attack might alienate a number of his readers, and it is possible, too, that his fondness for liquor influenced his attitude.

Abolitionism was another reform movement about which Ward had much to say. In fact, the most vitriolic satire to be found in his writings was aimed at the abolitionists. Since I analyzed in detail in an earlier article his comments on this issue, I will limit myself here to a summary account of them.<sup>12</sup>

Ward's first attacks on abolitionism were aimed at Oberlin College. In August, 1858, he denounced the policy of the college of admitting Negro students.<sup>13</sup> Then in the fall of the same year he reported the freeing by a mob of John Price, a fugitive slave, and the subsequent arrest of fifteen members of the mob.<sup>14</sup> It was during the trial of these men the following April that the now famous "Oberlin letter" appeared.<sup>15</sup> In it he attacks Henry Peck and Charles G. Finney, both leaders of the abolitionist group at the college. He also denounces bitterly the policy of giving Negro students the same privileges as those granted to white students.

In April, 1860, Ward again attacked the Abolitionists in a letter entitled "Artemus Ward Encounters the Octoroon."<sup>16</sup> In this letter the showman relates in an amusing fashion his being duped on a railway train by a white man and a mulatto who poses as a

11. "Artemus Ward on His Travels," *Vanity Fair*, III (Jan. 12, 1861), p. 15.

12. "Civil War Humor: Artemus Ward," *Civil War History*, II (Sept., 1956), pp. 87-101.

13. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Aug. 23, 1858, p. 4.

14. *Ibid.*, Sept. 21, 1858, p. 4; Nov. 9, 1858, p. 3.

15. *His Book*, p. 64.

16. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 21, 1860, p. 3. His use of the word "octoroon" was no doubt inspired by a currently popular play by Boucicault entitled *The Octoroon*, which was considered abolitionist in sentiment.

freed slave from Mississippi. The two plead with the showman to give them money to help free the woman's eighty-seven-year-old mother from slavery. After he has good-naturedly given them fifty dollars, he learns that they are swindlers who prey on the sympathies of gullible people. The inference is, of course, that most abolitionists are innocent people who are being gulled by the Negro slaves in the South.

On the subject of economic reform Ward was virtually silent. The industrial revolution which was spreading rapidly over the northern states during his lifetime brought new wealth and economic independence to the common man, but it was also the cause of serious social and economic problems which baffled the best thinkers of the age. Mushroom-like, cities to house workers sprang up around the new industrial plants in a haphazard fashion. As new immigrants, willing to work for appallingly low wages, crowded into the United States, native industrial workers became restless. Working hours were long, working conditions unhealthy and dangerous, and living conditions crowded and unsanitary; but since a philosophy of *laissez faire* dominated the economic thinking of the time, industry went uncontrolled until after the Civil War. Reformers of the period attacked every phase of the factory system as well as the prevailing economic philosophy. Some Transcendentalists took a firm stand against industry and the capitalistic system, and the collectivistic communities stood for radical economic reform. Trade unions were also revived in the early fifties, and labor leaders protested vehemently against the special privileges of business. There was little agreement, however, as to how the economic and resultant social problems were to be solved, and few reforms were actually effected.

Cleveland, because of its advantageous location, was growing rapidly during Ward's stay there. New industries employing from ten to one hundred men were constantly springing up in the city, and many immigrants, chiefly German, were being drawn to Cleveland by them. Ward's reports of court proceedings show vividly that the city faced serious social problems arising directly or indirectly from industrial expansion. Daily, cases of prostitution, rape, incest, drunkenness, assault, murder, robbery, and arson were tried in the police court or in the court of common pleas. Although Ward was most certainly aware of the underlying economic causes of many of these ugly problems, he did not take a firm stand against the prevailing *laissez faire* economic philosophy nor against the commercialism of the times. Albert J. Nock, in an

article written some years ago, contends that Ward did adopt such a position in his writings. Nock writes, "As Ward saw America, its god was Good Business; its monotheism was impregnable. Of man's fundamental social instincts only one, the instinct of expansion, had free play, and its range was limitless."<sup>17</sup> Nock presents, however, scanty evidence to support this viewpoint, and a close perusal of Ward's writings will show that there is meagre proof to substantiate it. It is true that the business ethics of the old showman are not of the highest calibre; he does advise the editor to whom he addresses "One of Mr. Ward's Business Letters" to "cum the moral on 'em strong" and he solemnly promises, "You scratch my back & Ile scratch your back."<sup>18</sup> But economic protest is not a prevailing theme in his writings. In his comments on the Shakers, for example, he neither praises nor condemns their practice of communism. The only other article in addition to the one mentioned above which contains statements that might be interpreted as indictments of the inequalities of the economic system is contained in a review of a book by William Sanger entitled *The History of Prostitution*. In his review of the book, he says,

We hear something, now and then about the "clanking" of Negroes' chains in the South. A vast deal has been said about the evils of intemperance. Eminently respectable sums of money have been contributed by eminently respectable churches to convey the gospel across the seas to howling, dirty savages. But we never heard of missionaries being sent among the factory workers of New England, to tell them that their reeking-hot, sickly and deathly mills were supplying the New York houses of prostitution with the larger part of their fresh victims—for such is the plain truth.<sup>19</sup>

Ward neither eulogizes industrial expansion, business ethics, and the *laissez faire* economic philosophy of the time, nor does he oppose contemporary economic reformers; but silence does not imply assent in either case. Perhaps as the local editor of an important newspaper in a city which was intoxicated with the idea of expansion, he did not dare to dissent openly. Advertisers also had to be taken into consideration. At any rate, in view of the scanty evidence available in his works, Ward can be safely classified neither as an economic reformer nor as an outspoken enemy of economic reform.

In conclusion, it should be remembered that Ward, in registering

17. Albert J. Nock, "Artemus Ward's America," *Atlantic Monthly*, CLIV (Sept., 1934), p. 279.

18. *His Book*, pp. 17-19. It is interesting to note that the expressions quoted do not appear in the first version of the letter published in the *Plain Dealer*. Perhaps the unscrupulousness of war contractors called his attention to the ethics of the businessmen of the time.

19. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Nov. 13, 1858, p. 3.



his opposition to most reformers and reform movements was not presenting a minority report. Many reformers were unstable individuals who over-simplified the solutions to very complex social problems, and many reformers themselves spoke out sharply against overzealousness. Curti states that the majority of Americans were either "indifferent or hostile to the reform movements."<sup>20</sup> Mildly conservative in most things Ward directed his satire largely at the "lunatic fringe" in the reform groups. His norm is usually sanity and good sense. The one outstanding exception to this, his extreme antipathy to abolitionism, is to be explained, first by his deep-seated prejudice against the Negro race, and secondly, by his strong political convictions.

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20. Curti, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

## In Defense of Dewey Dell

By RICHARD J. STONESIFER

In the criticism that has so far appeared on Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, the one of the Bundren clan who has been, I think, most consistently misunderstood and neglected is Dewey Dell, the pregnant daughter. She has either been cavalierly written off as "characterless" (O'Connor) or as "vegetable . . . concerned only with her ease" (Howe), or she has been seen as "the embodiment of fecundity . . . going with the family, not really to take her mother's corpse to the cemetery, but to purchase abortive 'pills' in the town's drugstore" (Malin).

None of these evaluations do her justice. Moreover, a thorough reading of the novel and an understanding of what the author is doing in it show that they are as wrong as Cora Tull's criticism of her as a "tomboy girl." Cora, we remember, is wrong about practically everything in the Bundren family. But critics cannot be excused so readily. And so it is, I think, time that someone rose to the defense of Dewey Dell, rescuing her from the Limbo to which she has been relegated by so many for so long.

There is, it has been contended, a fatal imprecision about her. She is, says Irving Howe in his *William Faulkner: A Critical Study*, hardly a bold original but "borrowed from the common store of Southern fiction . . . the one Bundren who fails to emerge clearly." This can be granted, though there have been more not-quite-bright-but-oh-so-fertile farm girls in Southern novels since 1930 than before. Dewey Dell is more original than imitation. William Van O'Connor in his *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner* notes that so far as Anse, Cash, and Jewel are concerned Faulkner's theme "seems consistently worked out," but that in the case of Vardaman, Darl and Dewey Dell "it seems confused, or at least more devious." Certainly Vardaman is a somewhat unfortunate fictional creation, and Darl's madness is probably not adequately prepared for by Faulkner. But is Dewey Dell's relationship to the theme such a cloudy one? I think not, and for the following reasons:

*As I Lay Dying* is a story growing from Addie Bundren's revenge on her husband, Anse, for failing her. As a young girl, without living relatives, in charge of a schoolroom, she could feel no kinship with her students. When she whipped them she thought, "Now you are aware of me! Now I am something in your secret and

selfish life, who have marked your blood with my own for ever and ever." Gripped by her aloneness, and motivated by her father's words to her—"the reason for living is to get ready to stay dead a long time" (which she interprets to mean establishing a vital connection with someone)—she marries Anse. But she discovers that for Anse love is a word, not a deed of surrender or a giving of the self. She cannot, she tells us, impose herself on his "secret and selfish life," and their creation of children thus becomes meaningless. So, she gives herself to the minister Whitfield, establishing a relationship, though a sinful one, that she thinks of as connecting her "to the alive, to the terrible blood, the red bitter flood boiling through the land." Here too, however, the man fails her. Whitfield, as hypocritical a creature as Faulkner has ever created, preserves his aloneness—she took, Addie tells us, "the precautions that *he* thought necessary for *his* sake" [*italics mine*].

Cash and Darl's birth have taught her that Anse is dead to her. "My aloneness," she says, speaking of Cash's birth, "had been violated and then made whole again by the violation." And Darl's birth causes her to say, "Then I believed that I would kill Anse." So she turns to Whitfield, is betrayed again, gives birth to his son, and then, in a strange following of honor, "gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel . . . gave him Vardaman to replace the child I robbed him of . . . and then I could get ready to die."

We are interested in two things as we read the fifty-nine sections that comprise the novel: watching the Bundrens fulfill the promise that Anse has made to Addie to return her body to Jefferson for burial with her kin; and watching the relationships, the tensions and changes, among the children as the journey progresses. Irving Howe has put it nicely: "In *As I Lay Dying* the theme is death, death as it shapes life. The outer action, never to be neglected and always fearsomely spectacular, is a journey in a wagon; the inner action is the attempt of the Bundrens to define themselves as members of a family at the moment the family is perishing."

What part has Dewey Dell in all this? We see her first standing beside the dying Addie's bed, endlessly fanning her. She is pregnant but still in possession of her secret.<sup>1</sup> Her lover, Lefe, a neighbor boy, has deserted her, giving her ten dollars with instructions to get pills at a drugstore and to tell the druggist "me and him wouldn't never tell nobody you sold it to us." In short, Dewey

1. Campbell and Foster in *William Faulkner: A Critical Appraisal* maintain that Dewey Dell's "mammalian ludicrosities," referred to by Darl when he describes the misadventure in crossing the river, are "no doubt her rounded and much enlarged stomach and breasts." But she has not reached this stage of pregnancy. Only Darl imaginatively can muse on her tightening dress.



Dell has suffered the same violation of her aloneness and is, at the beginning of the novel, suffering the same making of it whole again (to use Addie's phrase) as Addie has suffered. She is, thus, Addie's living counterpart, forced to the realization that Lefe's love is on the word-level too, and compelled finally at the novel's end to accept her aloneness in a world which has treated her brutally. Far from being a peripheral character, she is centrally involved in the novel's symbolic action.

In creating Dewey Dell to act out on a different level much of Addie's story, Faulkner has worked some changes, skillfully differentiating her from Addie. Her initial giving of herself to Lefe is not the conscious attempt to establish contact with the secret life of another being that Addie's was in marrying Anse and in giving herself to Whitfield. But Dewey Dell is not the philosopher that Addie is; she submits her fate to chance, as one might toss a coin in the air for decision:

We picked on down the row, the woods getting closer and closer and the secret shade, picking on into the secret shade with my sack and Lefe's sack. Because I said will I or won't I when the sack was half-full because I said if the sack is full when we get to the woods it won't be me. I said if it don't mean for me to do it the sack will not be full and I will turn up the next row but if the sack is full, I cannot help it. It will be that I had to do it all the time, and I cannot help it.

This is not, one would say, a sound basis on which to make decisions determining one's destiny. And yet it is precisely what one would expect from a girl such as Dewey Dell, and it makes as much sense as Addie's choosing of Anse, certainly as blind a groping as one can imagine in connection with finding a lover who could know love as something other than a word!

Once the choice has been made and the realization of Lefe's betrayal of her is clear, Dewey Dell reacts as Addie had: "I feel my body, my bones and flesh beginning to part and open upon the alone, and the process of coming unalone is terrible." This can, it seems to me, be read two ways, as a quite literal picture of conception and advancing pregnancy, or as a description of the same process that Addie has been through, of having aloneness violated and then made whole again when the realization of betrayal is evident. Dewey Dell's cry of "Lefe. Lefe. 'Lefe.' Lefe. Lefe," is certainly akin to the cry from Addie's heart to Anse in the first years of their marriage.

It has been maintained that Dewey Dell is an unfeeling, selfish girl. But could one believe at all in this seventeen-year-old girl if she did not exist in an "orbit of egoism," Irving Howe's con-

demning phrase for her, believing as she must that "everything in the world for me is inside a tub full of guts, so that you wonder how there can be any room in it for anything else very important"? Her plight forces her to think first of herself. "I feel," she says, "like a wet seed wild in the hot blind earth." How else could she feel?

What we are intended to see, I think, in Dewey Dell's frenzied thoughts is a counterpart to the process by which Addie came to realize that she had to live with aloneness. In Addie's case, however, this wrestling with the inevitability of aloneness had occurred within marriage; Addie was free at least from social disapproval and parental punishment. Dewey Dell, though she struggles not to believe what is happening to her, must come to this realization, too. But in her case there is added the extremely practical problem of pregnancy outside wedlock.

She looks at Peabody, the doctor: "It's because I am alone. If I could just feel it, it would be different, because I would not be alone. But if I were not alone, everybody would know it. And he could do so much for me, and then I would not be alone. *Then I could be all right alone*" [italics mine]. The chaotic quality of this speech is evidence of her frantic state of mind, but what it certainly means is that (1) she is so desperate in her aloneness that she wishes even for the companionship of a stirring embryo; but (2) with the embryo growing within her, everyone will know of her shame; and so (3) if only Peabody would rid her of it she could manage to bear the aloneness engendered by Lefe's turning his back on her. Peabody, however, cannot help her, even if he would, because he does not know her need. She sums this up: "He is his guts and I am my guts. And I am Lefe's guts. That's it."

Dewey Dell does not have Addie's mental resources, but she glimpses the inevitable end, Addie's cry of "I would be I." And so, while we cannot admire her as we admire Addie for her tough-minded acceptance of her aloneness, we must feel keen sympathy for her, trapped, scared, haunted by what is ahead for her. Can we, in the light of all this, call her a "vegetable," or accuse her of living selfishly for herself? "I try," she cries at one point, "but I can't think long enough to worry."

And is she really unfeeling? Darl, from the seat of the wagon as he and Jewel move away from the death-scene, imaginatively paints for us what the moment of Addie's death must be like. Dewey Dell "flings herself across Addie Bundren's knees, clutching her, shaking her with the furious strength of the young before sprawling across the handful of rotten bones that Addie Bundren

left. . . .” Her ministrations to Cash on the journey following the breaking of his leg are not the actions of a selfish creature. And her evaluation of Jewel early in the book as one who “don’t care about anything he is not kin to us in caring, not care-kin” can hardly be made to fit such a picture.

Dewey Dell is certainly more sinned against than sinning. The cynical exploitation of her naiveté by the drug clerk MacGowan, who seduces her in the cellar of the drugstore by telling her that some of the “hair of the dog” will stop pregnancy, needs no comment. But the righteous indignation of Moseby, the first druggist she visits, is hardly much better in terms of aiding her. He tells her to “go home and tell your pa or your brothers if you have any or the first man you come to in the road,” advice that, though he may not know it, would produce no good—Anse takes her ten dollars at the end of the book without making any real effort to find out how she came by it; the only one of her brothers who knows of her plight is Darl, unable or unwilling to aid her; and asking for aid from a stranger is likely to mean just another encounter with another MacGowan.

## II

One charge against Dewey Dell remains: her informing Gillespie that Darl fired his barn and her turning on Darl as violently as Jewel does in the scene at the cemetery gates in Jefferson. Can we in some way forgive her for this?

I think we can. Darl has realized instinctively what her condition is:

. . . and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. But he said he did know and I said “Are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him?” without the words I said it and he said “Why?” without the words. And that’s why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows.

This is a significant passage, not alone because it establishes Darl’s mystical ability to know things, a quality that has been sufficiently discussed in other criticism; it is significant because it introduces Dewey Dell’s basis for hating Darl as a violator of her secret and because it introduces pertinent material about her relationship with Anse, a point that most critics have overlooked.

Why will knowledge of her condition “kill” Anse? We would suspect that he would respond to it as he responds to everything

else—"if ever was such a misfortunate man." We get the hint, I think, as we watch Dewey Dell in the scenes clustered around their passing of the entrance to the New Hope cemetery, where they could easily turn in and bury Addie, saving themselves further agony. Samson, a bystander, tells us of Dewey Dell's rage at him for suggesting that this would be the sensible thing to do:

. . . so I says, "You stay here tonight and early tomorrow you can go back to New Hope. I got tools enough, and the boys can go right after supper and have it dug and ready if they want," and then I found that girl watching me. If her eyes had a been pistols, I wouldn't be talking now. I be dogs if they didn't blaze at me. And so when I went down to the barn I come on them, her talking so she never noticed when I come up.

"You promised her," she says. "She wouldn't go until you promised. She thought she could depend on you. If you don't do it, it will be a curse on you."

"Can't no man say I don't aim to keep my word," Bundren says. "My heart is open to ere a man."

"I don't care what your heart is," she says. She was whispering, kind of, talking fast. "You promised her. You've got to. You—" Then she seen me and quit, standing there. If they'd been pistols, I wouldn't be talking now.

Dewey Dell is not interested in Anse's "heart." And she has taken over as the guardian of her mother's decree. Her rage here is not, I submit, completely connected to her desire to get to a town where abortive pills are available.

Likewise, in her musings the next day as they pass the entrance to the New Hope cemetery, when she tells us of a dream in which she killed Darl and in which she speaks of the power that she has over Anse:

He'll do as I say. He always does. I can persuade him to anything.

. . . Suppose I say turn here. . . . Suppose I do. We'll go to New Hope. We won't have to go to town.

But she does not give the word, for two reasons: she must force Anse to keep his promise and fulfill Addie's command, and her own problem is too pressing. She says:

I heard that my mother is dead. I wish I had time to let her die. I wish I had time to wish I had. It is because in the wild outraged earth too soon too soon too soon. It's not that I wouldn't and will not it's that it is too soon too soon too soon.

Certainly the same double motivation causes her to wreak her vengeance on Darl for daring to try to break her mother's command. But the greatest betrayal is Anse's, for she feels that he loves her, that knowledge of her pregnancy would "kill" him. But

we know that it would do no such thing. His taking of the ten dollars is proof enough of this. And it is proof too that her feeling of having power over him is illusory, the complete realization of which must come to her as she watches him approach the wagon with the duck-shaped woman.

### III

Irving Howe pictures Dewey Dell at the end of the novel "munching her banana, [continuing] to move in an orbit of egoism." This certainly is shallow criticism. And to deny this girl the solace of a banana is criminal! Or to deny that she has the right to withdraw into herself to contemplate her swelling belly is to mistake her meaning in the novel.

Faulkner has attached strings of repetitions to several of his characters, repetitions that characterize and indicate significances. The "Chuck Chuck Chuck" of Cash's adze, for example, or Vardaman's "Cooked and et Cooked and et" and Darl's cry of affirmation of brotherhood "Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes." Two such are assigned to Dewey Dell—her "Lafe. Lafe. 'Lafe.' Lafe. Lafe." early in the book and her "I believe in God, God. God, I believe in God" later. Both are futile cries in her case. And both ought to make us regard her with compassion, not with scorn.



# Poetic Theory in the Middle Ages

By ELLIS GALE SHIELDS

The late fourteenth century theory of poetry consisted almost entirely of the application of rhetorical theory to poetry, and the various "poetriae" were actually rhetorics, their authors, rhetoricians.<sup>1</sup> Chaucer's "Gaufred" was one of these and "Gaufred's" *Poetria Nova* is among the important texts. So were Matthieu de Vendome's *Ars Versificatoria* and John of Garland's *Exempla honestae vitae*. The latter author remained important enough in the fifteenth century for Lydgate to speak admiringly of him.<sup>2</sup> Gower as well as Chaucer seems to have known and used Geoffroi.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Chaucer's reference to "lerner Marcus Tullius Scithero" (*Franklin's Prologue*, 722) is apparently to Cicero as a rhetorician, as the author of either the *De Inventione*, or the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, that textbook still attributed to Cicero in the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Since Chaucer goes on to speak of the "colours of rethorik," it seems likely that he refers to the *ad Herennium*, much of which defines and illustrates the figures of rhetoric.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship between these pre-Christian studies of rhetoric and the twelfth and thirteenth century poetriae is an intimate one despite their more than a thousand years' separation and their divergent aims. The classical statements of rhetoric are the chief

1. See Charles Sears Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic* (New York, 1928), pp. 185-196, and J. W. H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase* (London, 1945), p. 96f.

2. In his *Court of Sapience*. Quoted in D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance* (New York, 1922), pp. 47-50.

3. See B. Balfour Daniels, "Rhetoric in Gower's *To King Henry the Fourth*, In Praise of Peace," *Studies in Philology*, 32:62-73, January 1935.

4. The attribution of this work to Cicero continued until the middle of the following century when Lorenzo Valla first questioned it. See [Cicero], *Ad C. Herennium De Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)*, ed. and trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. ix. Hereafter cited as *ad Herennium*.

5. That the poet should know rhetoric is implied by Deschamps; according to W. L. Wiley,

In the fourteenth century, Eustache Deschamps wrote his famous *Balade sur la mort de Guillaume de Machaut* (1377), his master and predecessor. The first stanza of this poem is as follows:

Armes, Amours, Dames, Chevalerie  
Clercs, musicans, faitiues en francois  
Tous sophistes, toute poeterie  
Tous ceuls qui ont melodieuse voix  
Ceulx qui chantant en orgue aucun fois  
Et qui on chier le doulz art de musique  
Demenez dueil, plourez, car c'est bien drois  
La mort Machaut le noble rethorique.

In calling Machaut *le noble rethorique*, Deschamps clearly means that he is a very noble poet, and, in addition, the quintessence of all rhetoric. The editor of this standard edition of the works of Deschamps, Le Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire, says in a note at the end of the above poem that rethorique means "rhetoricien, c'est-a-dire poete." Deschamps, however, does not always think of rhetoric as being synonymous for poetry or the poet—"Who Named them Rhetoriciens?" *Medieval Studies in Honor of J. D. M. Ford* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), pp. 336-337.

sources of the later treatises. The metamorphosis of rhetoric into poetic has an interesting history, told by Baldwin, Curtius, Faral, Atkins, and others.<sup>6</sup> Originally a study of the art of persuasion, rhetoric traditionally had three separate fields—the deliberative, the judicial, and the epideictic or occasional speech. It would seem that rhetoric and poetry have always been connected, for the rhetoricians frequently drew upon the poets for illustrative material. Rhetoric, however, has as its primary aim persuading men to act—by means of skillful speech—a point that Cicero makes abundantly clear in the opening paragraphs of the *De Inventione*.<sup>7</sup> Deprived of its natural sphere in the forum and the courtroom, first by the Empire and then by the feudal system, rhetoric became epideictic only and found new uses in ecclesiastical oratory (*ars praedicandi*) and in letter writing (*ars dictandi*) as well as in the formulation of poetic theory (*ars versificandi*) during the centuries of the Christian era.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the decline of education during the barbarization of the Roman Empire apparently caused the neglect of the mature work of Cicero and of Quintilian. More useful to the Middle Ages than these philosophical studies were those textbooks of rhetoric, the *De Inventione* and the *ad Herennium*, which gave simple directions, generally accompanied by illustrations, and were thus easily adapted to the needs of schoolboys. The aforementioned works on rhetoric were familiar to Matthieu, Geoffroi, and John, who derived their theory of poetic from them.<sup>9</sup> Geoffroi, when his exposition of one figure became extensive, merely said, “for more of this, see Cicero” (*Poetria Nova*, 1251). Since he follows the *ad Herennium* figure by figure in this section of the *Poetria Nova*, obviously he refers to that textbook. Since these two textbooks are important for this study, perhaps a brief résumé of their contents will not be amiss. Cicero’s *De Inventione*, which was known in the Middle Ages as the *rhetorica veta*, in contrast to the *ad Herennium* as the *rhetorica nova*, consists of two books dealing with the first of the five parts of oratory: invention, disposition, expression, memory, and delivery. In the first book Cicero defends rhetoric, defines its functions and ends, treats of

6. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard Trask (New York, 1954) and Edmond Faral, *Les Arts Poétiques du XIII<sup>e</sup> et du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Paris, 1923). All citations from Matthieu and Geoffroi are from this edition of Faral.

7. Cicero, *De Inventione*, ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1949). All citations from the *De Inventione* are from this edition.

8. Curtius comments, “. . . rhetoric lost its original meaning and purpose. Hence it penetrated into all literary genres. Its elaborately developed system became the denominator of literature in general. This is the most influential development in the history of antique rhetoric” (p. 70).

9. See Faral, pp. 48-54, 99-103.

the four issues: conjectural, definitive, general, translativ, and then discusses the divisions of an oration, of which he says there are six: introduction, narrative, partition, confirmation, refutation, peroration. In his discussion he gives the topics (*loci, genus, res*) suitable for each part, and notes under what circumstances each topic is most useful. Although these topics are of invention, they are so closely allied to style (*eloquentia, expression*) that Cicero felt obliged to keep repeating that there would be more discussion in the section on expression, as in "quo de genere dicendum est in praeceptis elocutionis" (I, xx).<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, this section was never written.

In Book II of *De Inventione* Cicero sketches briefly the history of rhetoric and stresses the eclectic nature of his own study. He then treats of invented arguments suitable to each issue of the three types of oratory. The first issue is conjectural or issue of fact in judicial oratory: did or did not the accused commit the crime? Cicero presents the arguments for both sides, concluding with the commonplaces for this issue. He follows a similar plan for each of the other three issues, the definitive, the general, and the translativ, confining his attention to judicial oratory. He then turns to cases involving written documents. This section concluded, he discusses deliberative oratory and, very briefly, epideictic. Although there is considerable narrative in the book, which adds to its interest, much of it reads like a law book.

Book I of the *De Inventione* apparently contains material both of interest to, and with influence upon, medieval rhetoricians. Matthieu de Vendome, for example, takes from chapters xxiv-xxv his technique for describing a person (*Ars Versificatoria* I, 38-92), from chapters xxvii-xxviii his technique for describing action (*Ars Versificatoria* I, 93-112).

The first three books of the *ad Herennium* are so similar to the *De Inventione* that it would be repetitious to discuss them. Although these two treatises are not now generally considered interdependent, they derive from common sources and, according to Hubbell, the Loeb Classics editor and translator of the *De Inven-*

10. Perhaps the distinction between the topics or places of invention and the figures of expression was not entirely clear to the youthful Cicero. Perhaps the twelfth century theorists of poetry may not have "perverted" rhetoric; rhetoric chiefly as style seems implicit in the system. Richard McKeon comments upon the uses of the commonplaces:

Finally, the art of poetry came to be considered after the twelfth century, not as a branch of grammar, but alternately a kind of argumentation or persuasion (and as such subordinate to logic or morals) and a form of composition (and as such to be treated in terms of style, organization, and figures borrowed from rhetoric). In common, these three tendencies continue the terms and so some points of the organization of the *ad Herennium* and of Cicero's *De Inventione*, but the commonplaces which have been put to so many uses are no longer devices for discovering arguments of things and their traits, but devices for remembering, for amplifying, for describing, and for constructing figures—"Rhetoric in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, 17:28-29, January 1942.



tion, probably from the same source. The main difference between the two treatises comes in book four of the *ad Herennium* (which is almost half the volume), where the author treats of expression or style. This treatment is largely (chapters xiii-lvi) confined to the definition and illustration of forty-five figures of speech (*figurae verborum*), which include the ten tropes as figures, and nineteen figures of thought (*figurae sententiarum*); a figure is merely the form of expression, by word-play, by imaginative allusion, or by logical structure, by which an orator may state his ideas most effectively.

It is this part of ancient rhetoric which chiefly influenced Geoffroi de Vinsauf and John of Garland. If Matthieu derived his description from Cicero, these rhetoricians took their list of tropes and figures, in the *Poetria Nova* and the *Exempla honestae vitae*, respectively, directly from the *ad Herennium*.<sup>11</sup> Geoffroi here does little more than versify his source, when indeed he does that; and in his prose *Documentum de Arte Versificandi* he leans heavily upon the *ad Herennium*.

There were other sources for these rhetoricians. One was the *Ars Poetica* of Horace and another the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville. Both, but particularly the latter, were sources for Matthieu. He names and defines the following "schemata" or figures from Isidore:

zeuma, ypozeusis, anaphora, epynalensis, anadiplosis, epyzeusis, paranomasia, paranomeon, scesisonometon, omoetholeuton, polipteton, polissinteton, dialiton sive assinteton.<sup>12</sup>

He then lists and defines the following tropes: metaphor, antithesis, metonymy, synecdoche, periphrasis, epithet, climax, allegory, enigma (*Ars Versificatoria*, III, 19-44, in Faral, pp. 172-177); these he takes from the tradition of Donatus, according to Faral (p. 89). Matthieu collates his list with that of the *ad Herennium* to show that they are the same:

Videntur enim quaedam scemata et quidam tropi quibusdam coloribus rhetoricis respondere, quorum facienda est collatio. Sunt autem haec, quae combinata socialem habere videntur convientiam: antithetum et contentio, anaphora et duplicatio, paranomasia et annominatio, epenalempsis et repetitio, scesisonometon et membrum orationis, sive articulus, dialiton et dissolutum, polissyntheton et conjunctum, methalempsis sive clemax et gradatio. . . . (III, 45)

11. See Faral, pp. 52-59.

12. *Ars Versificatoria*, III, 3, in Faral, p. 168. Peculiarities of spelling are presumably those of medieval scribes. These peculiarities are not consistent, even within a single work. To note these divergent spellings consistently by the use of the conventional *sic* would be more irritating than helpful.

Later (III, 47), he merely lists the figures of speech from the *ad Herennium*, with a few omissions. Thus, although Matthieu is dependent on sources other than the *De Inventione* and the *ad Herennium*, he does not modify their rhetorical system significantly.

Geoffroi de Vinsauf was more dependent upon the *ad Herennium*, particularly in his section on style, as I have noted above. He takes the figures in the order of that text and gives examples of the *figurae verborum* and defines and illustrates the *figurae sententiarum*. Both his examples and his definitions are rather obscure, a fact which gives point to his suggestion: "quos omnes lege plenius in Cicerone" (*Poetria Nova*, 1251). The only important difference between Geoffroi's list and that of his source is that, whereas the tropes are included with the *figurae verborum* in the *ad Herennium*, Geoffroi placed the tropes in a separate group which he called the *ornatus difficilis*. He devotes more space to this group proportionately than to the figures, the *ornatus facilis*. Essentially Geoffroi, Matthieu, and John do not diverge in their doctrine of style from the ancient teaching found in the *ad Herennium*.

And it was style (*eloquentia*) which interested these rhetoricians. Invention was of little use to them and neither was memory or delivery. The only useful divisions of rhetoric were disposition and expression. Since disposition concerned only the methods of beginning and ending a poem, the rhetoricians devoted little time to it. They gave their major attention to expression, in both its aspects: amplification and ornament.

Amplification was important in ancient rhetoric, where it was intended to promote clarity of expression. In the late Middle Ages its purpose was in theory to develop and expand a subject;<sup>13</sup> in practice it added bulk to the narrative. Geoffroi in the *Poetria Nova* listed eight methods of amplification: (1) *expositio* and *interpretatio*, (2) *circuito*, (3) *collatio*, (4) *exclamatio*, (5) *conformatio*, (6) *digressio*, (7) *effictio*, *notatio*, *demonstratio*, (8) *oppositio*. The first group are methods of repetition of ideas in different words so that the ideas will be emphasized and refined by synonymous expression: *expositio* is a *figura sententiarum* and to give an example would take more space than I have; but *interpretatio* (a *figura verborum*) may be exemplified: "He won the debate; the gentle irony of his comments stupified his opponent and both amused and convinced the judge." *Circuito* (periphrasis) would replace the first statement by the second. *Collatio* is comparison, either by simile or more elaborate analogy. *Exclamatio* (apos-

13. See Faral, p. 61.

trophe) and *conformatio* (personification) are both elaborations which allow the expression of great feeling, frequently in many words. *Effictio*, *notatio*, and *demonstratio* are techniques used to describe the physical appearance, the character, and the action of a person respectively. *Oppositio*, an affirmation with a negation as in "sad and unhappy," is in essence *interpretatio*; the digression is too familiar to need elucidation.

Condensation was much less important. Geoffroi lists seven methods, however:

Concurrent ergo, sed apte,  
Emphasis, articulus, casus sine remige liber,  
Unius in reliquo nota callida, vincula dempta  
Clausarum, sensus multarum clausus in una,  
Ejusdem verbi repetitio nulla. Vel ista  
Omnia, vel saltem quod res desiderat ipsa.  
(Poetria Nova, 706-711)

That is, the devices of condensation include such methods as the ablative absolute, no repetition, and the insertation of many ideas into one sentence in addition to some of the usual rhetorical devices. It is significant that some methods of condensation are without name, quite unlike the devices of amplification. The rhetoricians, like the poets, seem more interested in bulk than in terse statement. The rhetorical figures used for condensation are therefore not generally of the same importance in the study of medieval literature.

Although these late medieval rhetoricians, following the *ad Herennium*, paid heed to the three styles: *attenuata* (*humilis*), *mediocris*, *gravis*, their principle of classification for poetry was based rather upon the social status of the characters in the narrative of the poem than upon that of simple, temperate, or exalted expression. Diction should be in accordance with people rather than with subject matter.<sup>14</sup> But the great stylistic concern of the rhetoricians was ornament, and ornament meant the tropes and figures, which dignified as well as amplified or condensed. The rhetorical devices, then, were extremely important as, to the medieval rhetorician, they were nearly all of the ancient art.

For the most part, the medieval rhetoricians derived these tropes and figures from the *ad Herennium*. Even when they rely on other sources, as does Matthieu, their figures correspond to those of that textbook. Consequently, any student of medieval poetry would do well to take Geoffroi's excellent advice and go directly to the primary source of medieval poetic theory, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

14. See Faral, pp. 86-87. Faral quotes John of Garland: "Item sunt tres styli secundum tres status hominum: pastoralis vitae convenit stylus humilis, agricolis mediocris, gravis gravibus personis quae praesunt pastoribus et agricolis" (p. 87).